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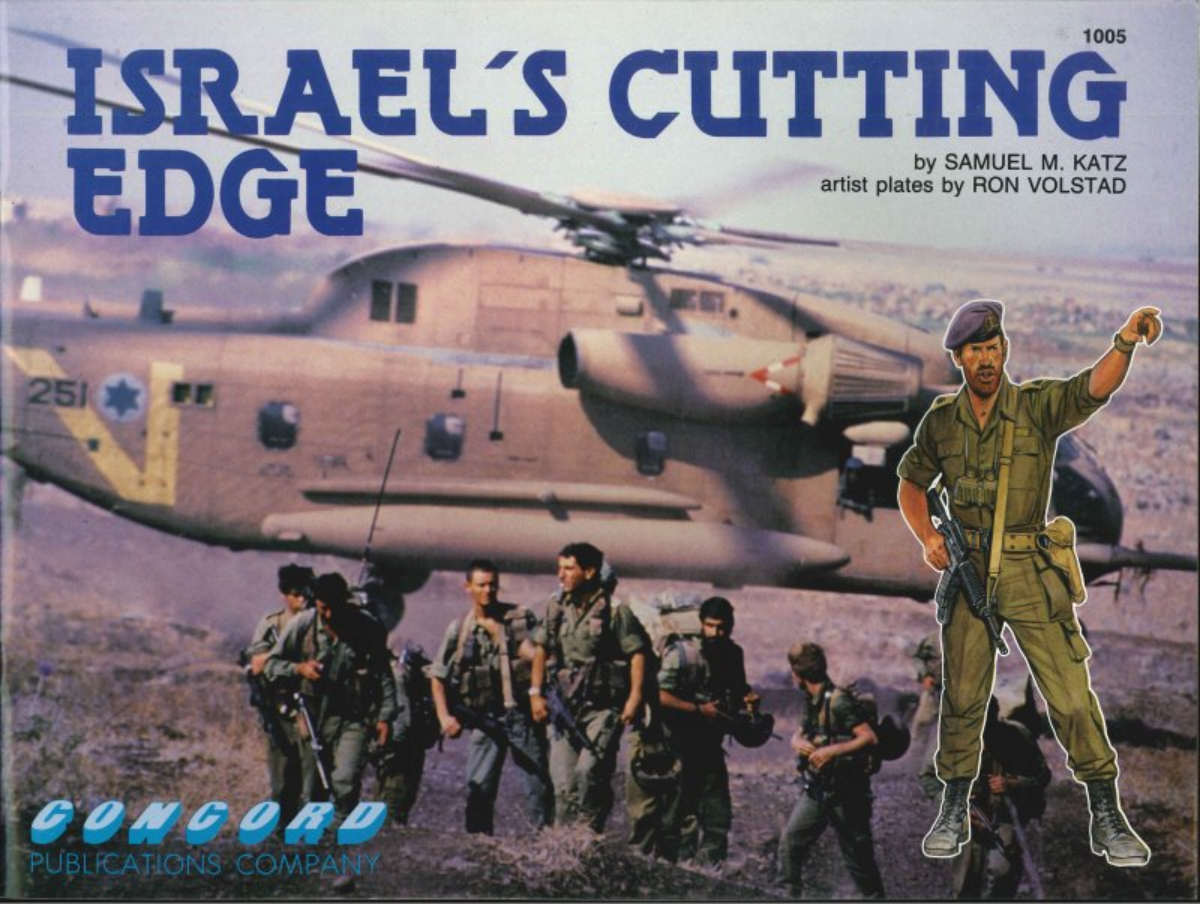
ISRAEL'S CUTTING EDGE

by SAMUEL M. KATZ
artist plates by RON VOLSTAD



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Front Cover

After departing the confines of their CH-53 helicopter, paratroopers ready for battle deploy for action with the officer, as always, at the helm.
(IDF)

Back Cover [Upper Left]

Paratroopers on maneuvers in southern Israel provide a "fighter-like" pose for the camera. Note ammunition/spent shell bag attached to the machine gunner's FN MAG, and medic (background) carrying stretcher on infantry packboard.
(IDF)

[Lower Left]

During large-scale maneuvers in the Negev Desert, a mechanized contingent of *NA'HA'L* paratroopers respond to the very real threat of a chemical attack.
(Jonathan Torgovnik/IDF Spokesman)

[Upper Right]

Surrounded by a cloud of smoke and "kicked up desert", a paratrooper fires his American made DRAGON ATGW during summer maneuvers.
(IDF Spokesman)

[Lower Right]

Always climbing, marching, and training, paratroopers negotiate yet another obstacle in their military career of conscript and reserve service. Note radioman carrying AN/PRC-25.
(IDF Spokesman)

INTRODUCTION – THE IDF'S ELITE FORCES: ISRAEL'S CUTTING EDGE

The State of Israel has never enjoyed the luxury of peace. Forever outgunned, outnumbered, and surrounded by a host of hostile neighbors, Israel has had a plight for survival unique to most nations on this earth. To meet these dire odds, Israel has relied on a superbly trained, well equipped, and highly motivated defense forces, known in hebrew as the *TZAVA HAGANAH L'YISRAEL*, or Israel Defense Forces (IDF). The IDF in turn has relied on a small, select, and extremely capable force of paratroopers, recon infantrymen and naval commandos to be its vanguard. A family of elite warriors, through whose heroics, and spectacular mission impossibles have captured the worlds attention, and secured a nation's survival: from Beirut to Entebbe, they have become known as the "IDF's cutting edge"!

The first two "Israeli" elite units were the *HAGANAH*'s (Israel's pre-state underground and forbearer to the Israel Defense Forces) "Field Companies" (*FO'SH*), and the joint British-Jewish anti-guerrilla patrol force commanded by the legendary Captain Orde Wingate called the Special Night Squads (SNS). Both these units, formed in the late 1930s to counter the vicious Arabi riots of 1930s, were small, handpicked forces whose ability to launch surprise, lightening attacks against superior enemy introduced an "innovative" thought to the budding Israeli military doctrine. In addition, both the *FO'SH* and the SNS installed into their fighters necessary doses of egalitarianism, and decisive command into the ranks. Although both units would eventually be disbanded for political reasons in 1939, they had an astounding effect on the strategy the *HAGANAH* would deploy in the struggle for Israeli independence. Yet the most important of Israel's pre-state elite forces was the *HAGANAH*'s *PAL'MACH* or "Strike Companies". The British originally sanctioned the formation and training of a 1,000 man indigenous "Jewish elite" when in 1941 the darkness of a German offensive against Palestine seemed a dire reality. Although the *HAGANAH* agreed that the *PAL'MACH*'s main military objective would be against the Nazis, the *HAGANAH* trained over 3,000 men and women within the framework of their newly found "Strike Companies" for the eventual fight for Israeli independence. The *PAL'MACH* attracted the elite of the Jewish Palestine, *FO'SH* and SNS veterans who rushed to the call of arms. They were men such as Yigal Alon, Yitzhak Rabin, and Moshe Dayan (who lost his eye on a joint *PAL'MACH*-Australian foray against the Vichy French in Syria), and with British funding, and a generous supply of arms and ammunition; were able to develop into a highly trained commando force. Their 'Arab Platoon' (made up of natives from Arab nations) waged a guerrilla campaign against Axis targets in Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq, while the 'German Platoon' (made up of German and Austrian refugees who were taught to infiltrate behind German lines) proved to be invaluable intelligence and commando fighters, infiltrating German POW camps, as well as assisting SAS operations in the Aegean Sea.

When WWII ended however, the marriage between the *PAL'MACH* and the British ended in bloodshed; as the true battle for Israel's independence began. The *PAL'MACH*'s three brigades led the armed struggle by attacking British radar and police installations, as well as taking the vanguard in battling the various Palestinian Arab forces for control of strategic areas. When the United Nations partitioned Palestine into both Jewish and Arabs states; the *PAL'MACH* mobilized its forces for full scale war. During the 1948 War of Independence, *PAL'MACH* units took to the offensive when the poorly outnumbered fighters in the newly formed Israel Defense Forces (IDF) could barely maintain a defensive footing. In the Negev Desert, in the Galilee, and amid the hard fought rubble of the holy city of Jerusalem, determined *PAL'MACH* units made 10 kilograms of home-made high explosives worth more than an battalion of riflemen, and reinforced the familiar *PAL'MACH* adage that the ultimate *PAL'MACH* unit was a "soldier and his rifle"! When the war ended in 1949, the *PAL'MACH* was disbanded out of the fear of it eventually becoming a militarily trained political elite, mainly because of the very extreme political views shared by many of the *PAL'MACH* fighters. Nevertheless, by inventing the "Follow Me" self-sacrificing ethic of command for its officers, the *PAL'MACH* will go down in Israeli history as the IDF's first true military elite.

With the *PAL'MACH* gone, the IDF was robbed of a living example from which its other units could hope to emulate. Even though a paratroop battalion was formed in 1949, they proved to be highly ineffective combatants with little stomach for elite force type operations. The military balance between the Arabs and Israelis in the early 1950s wasn't as much a challenge to see which force would seize the initiative, as was to see which army would perform worse on the battlefield. The military malaise was forever changed in 1953 when the IDF ordered the formation of a small counter-guerrilla force to stop Arab infiltrators. The force, which became to be known as UNIT 101, and its commander, Major Ariel 'Arik' Sharon would become the most influential of all IDF elite units, even though it would exist for little over six months. UNIT 101 took much of its tactics, behavior, and combat ethics from the *PAL'MACH*; including striking at night, striking in small numbers; and attacking deep into enemy territory. Although Major Sharon enjoyed a friendly relationship with his fighters who regarded him as one of their own rather than a commander; the UNIT 101 fighters performed in a highly disciplined fashion on the battlefield. They marched hundreds of kilometers into the enemy's unknown, and never returned to base unless their mission was carried out successfully. UNIT 101 also created the IDF's most infamous soldier, a scout named Meir Har-Zion whose inherit combat and tracking skills were legendary; and who was commissioned an officer without ever stepping foot inside the IDF's Officer School. Although UNIT 101 raids inside Jordan and Egypt virtually ended Arab infiltration within six months; the IDF General Staff decided to join the rabble-hearted commandos of UNIT 101 with the fledgling 890th Battalion's paratroop into a paratroop brigade; named UNIT 202. As always, the personality of officers such as Lt. Har-Zion, commander of the brigade's elite reconnaissance battalion or *SAYERET*, would shape the IDF's image for years to come.

Under the command of Lt. Colonel Sharon; UNIT 202 flourished not only as a counter-insurgency force, striking hard at Palestinian fedayeen (guerrilla; and forbearer to the PLO) bases in Egypt, and Jordan, but as a conventional paratroop force as well hitting military targets in Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. UNIT 202 also brought to prominence two of Israel's most famous soldiers and eventual chiefs of staff; Mordechai "Motta" Gur, and Rafael 'Rafu' Eitan; both battalion commanders under Sharon. On 31 October 1956; UNIT 202 faced its most grueling test under fire when Major 'Rafu' Eitan's 890th Battalion parachuted into the Mitla Pass to initiate the 1956 War. The subsequent battle in the strategic Sinai Desert pass proved to be the paratrooper's rite of passage; as they emerged from their shadowy existence into the IDF's premier unit. Soon other units were to follow in the paratroop's footsteps. In the years following the 1956 War, hundreds of paratroop officers were transferred into the ranks of the 1st *GOLANI* Infantry Brigade; until then considered a second rate combat formation. Within a matter of years, *GOLANI*, led by their elite reconnaissance battalion *SAYERET GOLANI*; became a fully operational infantry strike force, and participated in dozens of raids against Syrians and Jordanian targets. The IDF General Staff also invested heavily in the development of its naval commando (*KAMMANDO YAMI*) arm, and understanding the success of small recon units; created three territorial command reconnaissance forces based on such role models as the *PAL'MACH* and UNIT 101. They were *SAYERET SHAKED* – Southern Command, *SAYERET HARUV* – Central Command, and *SAYERET EGOZ* – Northern Command. To add speed and decisiveness to its armored divisions; a *SAYERET SHIRION* or 'Armored Recon' was also formed.

The expansion of elite forces into the IDF's vanguard was most evident on 6 June 1967 when an Israeli preemptive strike initiated the Six Day War. In Sinai; Colonel 'Rafu' Eitan's conscript paratroop brigade seized

Gaza, and the Suez Canal giving little quarter in their wake, while Colonel Mordechai "Motta" Gur's 55th Reserve Paratroop Brigade fought off the tenacious professional soldiers of the Jordanian Army to liberate the holy city of Jerusalem in some of the most bitter fighting yet seen in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Syrians were handled by the men of the *GOLANI* Brigade; who stormed heavily fortified fortresses such as Tel Fahar and Tel Azziziyat to seize the Golan Heights. The beaten but not destroyed Arab armies refused to lay down their arms and make peace; and inaugurated a brutal War of Attrition (1967-70) against the greatly expanded Israeli frontiers. The Arab advantage in men and weaponry was met by the wide scale Israeli use of her elite forces for special operations and commando raids. Against the Egyptians; the IDF mounted relentless deep penetration raids with recon paratroopers blowing up bridges and electric transformer stations near Cairo, naval commandos attacking such formidable fortresses as Green Island, and paratroopers "kidnapping" an Egyptian Soviet made P-12 anti-aircraft radar. In the Jordan Valley, paratroopers and *SAYERET HARUV* recon fighters waged an exhaustive campaign in the barren wasteland of the Jordan Valley, battling Palestinian terrorist infiltrators from carrying out their acts of destruction inside Israel. In the north; paratroopers, *GOLANI*, and *SAYERET EGOZ* recon units battled conventional military targets in Syria, and Jordan; while also waging an incessant campaign of pre-emptive strikes against Palestinian terrorists in Lebanon. To combat Palestinian terrorism in Israel and abroad; the IDF responded with striking operations. In December 1968, Colonel "Rafu!" Eitan personally commanded a paratroop raid against Beirut International Airport in which 13 Lebanese airliners were destroyed in retaliation for the hijacking of an Israel Airlines EL AL flight to Algiers. In May 1972, commandos from *SAYERET MAT'KAL*, the IDF's ultra-secret GHQ reconnaissance force; disguised themselves airplane technicians and rescued almost a hundred hostages from a BLACK SEPTEMBER held Sabena jetliner hijacked to Israel. The war against Palestinian terrorism culminated in spectacular fashion in March 1973, when a combined *SAYERET MAT'KAL*, paratrooper, and naval commando task force attacked key terrorist targets throughout Beirut and Lebanon; killing three of BLACK SEPTEMBER's top commanders.

Although the surprise joint Syrian and Egyptian attack against Israel erupting the 1973 Yom Kippur War was basically a "tank war"; Israel's elite force played a crucial role in the eventual, though bitterly fought victory. On the Golan Heights; the *GOLANI* Brigade put up an epic defense against vastly superior Syrian armor and infantry forces; refusing to relinquish even one of their fortified outposts even though they spent most of the war cut-off and surrounded. The brigade's parting shot of the war was the recapture of Mt. Hermon; seized in the first minutes of the war by the crack Syrian 82nd Parachute Brigade. The uphill struggle for the *GOLANI* infantrymen was brutal, as Syrian commando snipers picked off the advancing soldiers one by one. Determination, training, and the conviction of unit pride persevered however, and both the Israeli and *GOLANI* Brigade flags were raised atop Mt. Hermon at the cost of 55 *GOLANI* dead! In Sinai, paratroop and reconnaissance forces were despatched into the desert wasteland to interdict Egyptian commando efforts to seize the vital Mitla and Giddi Passes. As the tide of the fighting turned back into Israel's favor, Armored Division commander Major General 'Arik' Sharon (Res.) ordered reservist paratroopers to cross the Suez Canal and establish an Israeli bridgehead in Egyptian Africa. The move was a brilliant success, and the turning point in the Israeli victory. The naval commandos were also quite active during the 18 day fighting, and succeeded in carrying out dozens of sabotage missions against Egyptian naval facilities.

The 1973 War had traumatized the IDF; and it took one of the most dramatic operations ever by the IDF's elite to bring it back into form. On 27 June 1976, four PFLP terrorists hijacked an Air France flight en route from Tel Aviv to Paris via Athens to Uganda's Entebbe airport. After holding only the Israeli and Jewish hostages aboard the flight; the IDF decided to act. On the night of July 3rd; four Israel Air Force C-130 Hercules carrying a combined *SAYERET MAT'KAL*, paratrooper, and *GOLANI* recon task force landed at Entebbe, and in 90 minutes which captured the admiration of the world; freed her captive countrymen. The brilliant operation was marred by the tragic loss of the rescue force commander, Lt. Colonel Yoni Netanyahu; killed in typical IDF fashion while leading his men into battle. Following Entebbe, the IDF's elite forces concentrated their efforts on Lebanon, and the emergence of a very real Palestinian threat along Israel's northern frontiers. From 1973-1981, the IDF mounted hundreds of paratrooper, *GOLANI* and naval commando raids against Palestinian terrorist bases inside Lebanon to keep the terrorists at bay. The Palestinian threat against Galilee remained constant and deadly however, and Israel opted to once and for all eliminate the armed terrorist presence from her northern frontier. On 6 June 1982, a 30,000 man IDF invasion force crossed into Lebanon led by her elite units. The *GOLANI* Brigade's reconnaissance force stormed the crusader era Beaufort Castle seizing it only after bitter fighting from fanatic Palestinian defenders, and then proceeded towards the fanatic urban combat of the refugee camps, Tyre, Sidon, and Beirut. Meanwhile, a naval commando force had secured the mouth of the Awali River near Sidon, preparing it for an amphibious landing force of mechanized paratroopers. The IDF's elite faced a host of adversaries in that bitter conflict, from RPG toting terrorists to Syrian commando snipers, and succeeded in leading the IDF to victory. Victory did not bring peace nor an end to the fighting however, and until 1985, the best units the IDF could field were delegated to garrison duty amid a hostile population in southern Lebanon, and faced with a fanatic Shi'ite terrorist enemy.

Today, the IDF elite consist of five principle units: the paratroopers and the *GOLANI* and *GIVA'ATI* Infantry Brigades (together with their respective reconnaissance forces), the naval commandos, and the Air Force's Aeromedical Evacuation Unit. Other, more select and secretive reconnaissance or *SAYERET* units exist as well; maintained for specific operations. Service in their premier units is voluntary, and dependent on the soldier's physical and psychological excellence. The training is long and harsh, and will produce a soldier who is proficient in every weapon to be found in the Middle East: from the Israeli produced *GALIL* series of 5.56mm assault rifles, to the American M-16, to the mainstay of the Arab infantryman; the Soviet 7.62mm AK family. Their training will also introduce them to larger squad support weapons, including the 52mm hand held mortar, the American 66mm LAW, and the ubiquitous Soviet RPG-7; captured in such large numbers from the Arab armies over the past 3 major wars that they are an IDF standard issue item. The physical training they are subjected to is incessant; and the hundred kilometer forced marches with full kit over mountainous and desert terrain push the paratrooper, infantryman, and commando hopefuls to the limit of their physical edurance. The training is a crucial stage in the development of the elite unit soldier. For when serving along the Lebanese frontier, when called on to attack an enemy position, or when assigned a "special operation", the men of the IDF's elite units will have to perform the impossible and achieve the spectacular to remain in the vanguard of their army, and of their nation's survival.

◀▲ The founding fathers of the IDF's elite forces: Lt. Meir Har-Zion and Lt. Colonel Ariel 'Arik' Sharon of "UNIT 101" fame (to the right of Chief of Staff Moshe Dayan), and Captain Rafael "Raful" Eitan (kneeling, first row), then commander of the 890th Paratroop Battalion, and eventual IDF Chief of Staff.
(IDF Archives)

◀ The first and only IDF combat para-jump: men of the Major Raful Eitan's 890th Paratroop Battalion prepare a defensive position after jumping into the Mitla Pass in Sinai, 31 October 1956.
(IDF Archives)

▲ Perhaps the paratrooper's most epic battle to date: liberating Jerusalem during the 1967 Six Day War. Nervously seeking out Jordanian snipers, a rifleman in the 55th Reserve Paratroop Brigade maintains a vigilant stance through the gunsights of his Israeli produced FN FAL 7.62mm assault rifle.
(IDF Archives)

"Future IDF elite in production"! Under a brutal desert sun, paratroop basic trainees endure one of the many rites of passage they'll have to overcome in order to become a *TZANHAN* (paratrooper). This forced march; being a "mere" 50 kilometers, will soon be remembered as a simple walk in the woods! (BAMACHANE)

◀▲ Armed with a wide assortment of weaponry, including the infamous *UZI* 9mm submachine gun, and FN FAL rifles fitted with a bi-pod for squad support and anti-tank rifle grenades, a squad of paratroopers prepare to storm a Palestinian terrorist strongpoint during 'Operation *TOFET*', the large-scale commando operation against PLO targets in the Jordanian town of Karameh; 21 March 1968. (IDF Archives)

◀ Owing to the "ancient" IDF ethic of never leaving a wounded man behind on the battlefield; paratroop basic trainees sweat and grunt through a forced run, and in the process learn to bring a wounded comrade to safety. (IDF Spokesman)

Maximizing their T-10-R (IS) reserve parachutes as a pillow, paratroopers await the order to board their C-130 Hercules transports parked in the background.
(Michael Giladi/IDF Spokesman)

After six months of basic training, hundreds of kilometers of forced marches, and countless hours of weapons practice, its time to separate the men from the boys. At the Tel Nof Jump School, paratroop hopefuls undergo an initiation to the effect parachuting has on the body with on the infamous and dreaded 'Eichmann' jump tower.
(IDF Spokesman)

The inevitable end-product of a hard day's work with the IDF's red berets: gracious expressions of exhaustion on a training field in central Israel. No matter where a few moments of sleep are stolen, their *GALIL* assault rifles are always close at hand.
(IDF Spokesman)

◀ Realizing that his prized pupil might make a "vain" attempt to hold on for dear life, a jump instructor insures a clean exit from the practice tower. Note harness worn by instructor to insure the "ride down" is done solo.
(BAMACHANE)

▼ The big day has arrived. While a paratroop 1st Lieutenant looks on with a smirk of smugness, an infantryman 5th class has his T-10-R reserve chute adjusted during en route to his first jump, and his invitation into a very selective club.
(IDF Spokesman)

▶ Having survived the initial exit of the C-130 Hercules, his instructor's harsh kick in the backside, and the physical trauma of his chute opening up, a paratrooper glides to the desert earth through the mercy of his Type EFA-672 (IS) chute.
(BAMACHANE)

Another of the paratroop's more favored modes of transportation: the Sikorsky CH-53 helicopter; seen here about to land a force of paratroops during exercises in northern Israel.
(Sigalit Katz)

Besides being a vehicle for parachuting, the C-130 Hercules aircraft has other valued transport purposes as well. Here, during maneuvers resembling the IDF's 1976 rescue raid on Entebbe, paratroops practice deployment procedures from the belly of the almighty Hercules.
(BAMACHANE)

Charge!! With a convenient smoke screen affording cover, a squad of paratroopers practice assaulting enemy positions. Note excellent rear view of the IDF's revolutionary load bearing equipment.
(IDF Spokesman)

During a lull in desert combat training, a paratroop reservist officer awaits his signal to move out. Note brown leather paratroop boots worn, and commando knife tucked into web gear. The *GLILON* 5.56mm SAR is shown to advantage.
(IDF Spokesman)

When not training with aircraft, helicopters, armored personnel carriers or on the firing range, the men of the paratroop brigade find themselves on operational duty; like this squad in southern Lebanon. Note bush and field caps worn, and AN/PRC-25 radio worn by trooper (left).
(Author's Collection)

◀ Portrait of a *NA'HA'L* paratrooper, taken during a break in training. Note olive issue rainsmock worn.
(Michael Giladi/IDF Spokesman)

▶ After a successful patrol, paratroopers reload their reconnaissance jeep onto a CH-53, the paratroop's workhorse, for the quick ride back to base.
(IDF)

▼ Inside the forever dangerous open spaces of "bandit country" in southern Lebanon, paratroop officers direct a CH-53 to its LZ. Note ex-PLO "wooly pully" sweater worn by lead officer, and excellent rear view of IDF load bearing equipment.
(Michael Giladi/IDF Spokesman)

A paratroop squad on maneuvers in the natural splendor of the Negev Desert. Note radioman laden down with AN/PRC-25 field radio , and small rucksack with additional ammunition. He carries the *GLILON* 5.56mm SAR. (Jonathan Torgovnik/IDF Spokesman)

A paratroop unit in southern Lebanon nervously await further instructions from their platoon commander. Note riflemen (left) carrying the short barreled version of the *GALIL* 5.56mm assault rifle, affectionately known as the *GLILON*. (Sivan Farag/IDF Spokesman)

Along the border near the security zone in southern Lebanon, paratroopers from the *NA'HA'L* (Fighting Pioneer Youth) Paratroop Battalion conduct a "never routine" patrol. Note ammunition/spent shell bag attached to FN MAG 7.62mm light machine gun.
(BAMACHANE)

The long awaited ride home! Paratroopers, ominously carrying gas masks, board an Israel Air Force (IAF) Bell-212 helicopter in southern Lebanon. Note method for carrying personal gear on the very practically designed Israeli web gear.
(IDF Spokesman)

Although they may be a graying a bit, with a minor middle age belly setting in place, they are and will always be paratroopers! At a rocky roadside, the perfect spot for a terrorist ambush or a booby trap device, reservist paratroopers pause before continuing their vigil. Note lead soldier, who has attached the NIMROD 6×40 sniperscope produced by Ortek to his M16 5.56mm assault rifle.
(IDF Spokesman)

On a snow capped hilltop, paratroopers enjoy an improvised winter's firing range in the Lebanese heartland. Note medic (closest right), who has attached a forward pistol grip to his *GLILON* 5.56mm SAR.
(IDF Spokesman)

▲ On a field "somewhere" in northern Israel, paratroopers watch in awe as a C-130 para-unloads its precious M113 cargo. (BAMACHANE)

▲◀ As was, and as shall always be .... the Israeli officer leads from the front. This "follow me" ethic of command was born in the elite forces of pre-independence Israel such as the SNS and *PAL'MACH*, and as seen by this paratroop Captain leaping into action first, will continue for generations to come. (IDF)

◀ Excellent side view of the *GILON* 5.56mm SAR, as well as the IDF issue *BEGED HOREF* (winter suit), carried and worn by this paratrooper operating from "home base": a M113 *ZELDA* APC in southern Lebanon. (Jonathan Torgovnik/IDF Spokesman)

On a firing range in northern Israel, a paratroop grenadier prepares to fire a rifle grenade from his modified (built in bi-pod removed) *GALIL* ARM. Note indigenously produced pack for carrying rifle grenades, and convenient disposition of web gear, which does not interfere with a soldier in the firing position, and actually provides a convenient arm rest. (IDF Spokesman)

A paratroop officer and his every present radioman. The 2nd Lieutenant (*SAG'AM*) carries the short barrelled CAR-15 5.56mm assault rifle; the favored weapon of paratroop and infantry officers. (IDF Spokeman)

▲◀ Near the Lebanese border, paratroopers conduct a patrol from their heavily armed reconnaissance jeep. Note projector light fitted to FN MAG 7.62mm light machine gun, and articles of equipment, such as stretcher and packs of ammunition, attached throughout vehicle.
(Michael Zarfati/BAMACHANE)

▲ In the inhospitable rocky mountain terrain of southern Lebanon, paratroops supported by a *MERKAVA* Mk. II MBT named *ABIR* ("Mighty") secure a road against Shi'ite and Palestinian terrorists. Note radioman (left) who wears a white *Kefiyeh* (Arab headdress) as a scarf, and newly issued infantry packboard worn by grenadier (center) which supports rucksack carrying rifle grenades and extra ammunition.
(Sivan Farag/IDF Spokesman)

◀ After the May 1988 retaliatory strike against the Shi'ite village of Maidun, paratroopers are hastily loaded onto their awaiting CH-53 for the quick hop back to Israel.
(Michael Giladi/IDF Spokesman)

Crawling along the Negev Desert clear out of sight of "enemy" gunsights, a paratrooper radioman in NBC gear moves in to advantageous firing position. (IDF Spokesman)

Paratroop officers board their awaiting Bell-212 helicopter for the much welcomed ride back to Israel after the May 1988 raid. (Michael Giladi/IDF Spokesman)

On the West Bank, a paratroop radioman gingerly walks his beat; supporting security efforts in the area. Note AN/PRC-77 carried, and casual method for carrying the Kevlar infantry ballistic helmet. (Sigalit Katz)

Ever vigilant, ever ready ....! During Memorial Day ceremonies by the Western Wall in Jerusalem, captured by paratroopers over twenty years ago, paratroop officer cadets, red berets noticeable in the silhouette, man an anti-terrorist watch.
(Sigalit Katz)

During battalion level maneuvers in central Israel, paratroop conscripts sit and listen to a commanding officer's instruction with the undivided attention only a soldier can possess.
(IDF Spokeman)

A paratroop stretcher bearer pauses to catch his breath after running a "mild" 10 kilometer forced march. Note load bearing equipment medic's pouch (soldier's left, resting on ground), and packboard supporting stretcher.
(IDF Spokesman)

On the rocky training field in southern Israel, a paratroop grenadier sprints towards a suitable, concealed firing position. Note extended bi-pod legs of *GALIL* ARM.
(IDF Spokesman)

This photograph of paratroopers on maneuvers offers an excellent view of the newly issued infantry packboard. Attached to the load bearing equipment, and supported by a harness, the weight distributing packboard makes carrying an infantryman's basic heavy load of jerrycans, and ammunition filled rucksacks a much more "enjoyable" task.
(Sivan Farag/IDF Spokesman)

Another piece of personal infantry equipment produced by the Israeli defense establishment: a cushioned rucksack for carrying RPG-7 rockets. The RPG-7, captured in such abundance from the Egyptians, Syrians, and especially the Palestinians has become one of the paratroop's more standard issue and more effective anti-tank weapons.
(IDF Spokesman)

Although not quite as inviting as a tall pitcher of ice cold beer, after a full days training under the Middle East sun, a jerry can of warm water will do just fine! Photograph offers an excellent frontal view of this paratrooper's web gear, and in particular, the bandage and grenade pouches attached to web gear straps.
(IDF Spokesman)

An obviously over-burdened paratrooper about to get into firing position offers an excellent view of the IDF's standard issue "three pocket fatigue trousers". Note small pack with personal gear carried on back, and flashlight carried in front ammunition pouch.
(IDF Spokesman)

A paratroop officer well concealed by the desert terrain views the battlefield through field glasses during maneuvers. The Kevlar infantry ballistic helmet, decorated with "brown shoe polish camouflage" and fitted with black rubber tubing in typical IDF fashion is seen here to advantage.
(Ofer Karni/IDF Spokesman)

Battlefield decision made quick and easy. A paratroop officer, wearing an ex-PLO "wooly pully" sweater discusses his platoon's move with HQ over an AN/PRC-25 radio. Note heavily laden rucksack worn on back, and CAR-15, *always* found close at hand.
(Michael Giladi/IDF Spokesman)

A paratroop *MAGist* in his classic pose. Although it will soon be replaced by the Mini-MAG decreasing the gunner's load substantially, the FN MAG 7.62mm light machine gun has for years been a highly successful infantry squad support weapon. Note hessian attached to weapon bi-pod which affords the gunner a more comfortable grasp when carrying or firing.
(Herzl Kunesari/IDF Spokesman)

Two *MAGists* from the *NA'HA'L* Paratroop Battalion await their supporting *MERKAVA*, and the order to fire. The ammunition carrying bag is shown to advantage.
(Michael Giladi/IDF Spilesman)

This paratroop *MAGist* in action offers an excellent view of the Israeli produced Kevlar infantry ballistic helment. Note positioning of MAG bi-pod legs.
(Sivan Farag/IDF Spokesman)

Interesting view of a paratrooper *MAGist*; who in order to prevent ammunition jamming, has removed a belt of 7.62mm ammunition from his ammo bag. Other belts of ammunition are carried in the rather aged '37 Type khaki canvas pack. Note personally camouflaged helmet.
(IDF Spokesman)

Excellent view of a paratrooper *MAGist* in action. Note infantry ballistic helmet fitted with tan netting and black rubber tubing.
(*BAMACHANE*)

Three *NA'HA'L* paratroopers pose for the camera, after completing a "routine" day of assault exercises with their squadrons of M113s parked in the background. Note *MAGist* (right) whose olive fatigue blouse's *ZAHAL* (Hebrew acronym for IDF) nametape is seen to advantage.
(IDF Spokesman)

After awaiting the effects of an air-strike and artillery barrage to settle in, paratroopers leave the safety of their M113s to charge enemy positions: all in "good fun" during exercises in the Negev Desert.
(BAMACHANE)

With approximately 30 kilos worth of 7.62mm piercing his back, and the MAG's 13 kilos weighing down his arms, a *MAGist* replies to his order of *"LE'HISTA'ER* (take cover) and sprints into firing position.
(IDF Spokesman)

"The long olive green line"! Before deploying into battle position, a paratroop squad lines up. Note second paratrooper armed with M-16/M203 40mm grenade launcher. The IDF Ordance Corps has conveniently attached its supply of M203s to the other infantry weapons in the Israeli arsenal, including the CAR-15 and *GALIL* series.
(IDF Spokesman)

◀ A paratrooper equipped with indigenously designed anti-pressure shoes gingerly walks through an "enemy" minefield. The anti-mine shoes were originally issued to Combat Engineer sapper units only, but the need for paratroop and other infantry units to master enemy mine defenses could not be limited to only one branch of service.
(Author's Collection)

▶ Interesting photograph of paratroopers on maneuvers, carrying different sections of the *MAPATZ*, the Israeli modified "infantry version" of the U.S. TOW missile; its sections carried here on an old version infantry packboards. When not needed on the field, the *MAPATZ*'s tri-pod is fastened to the M113 glacis plate.
(*BAMACHANE*)

▼ The paratroop's other version of the TOW! An M113 TOW vehicle is displayed at a paratroop and infantry command exhibition.
(Courtesy Yoav Efrati)

"Only 25 klicks to go ....." ! On a forced march in the enjoyable 40 (C) heat of the Negev Desert, paratroop reservists laden down with equipment enjoy a day's exercise.
(IDF Spokesman)

While riflemen provide a protective ring of covering fire, the remaining elements of a paratroop squad assault an enemy position during mock battle training.
(IDF Spokesman)

"KADIMA ..... AHARAI" (Forward .... follow me)! Arching his body and advancing, a paratroop platoon commander leads his men up some inhospitable terrain. Note rear view of officer's web gear.
(IDF Spokesman)

With the distance of rank never a true concern in the IDF; a senior ranking paratroop officer chats with his conscript radioman during an interval in training. Note manner in which both soldiers have personally camouflaged their Kevlar infantry ballistic helmets.
(IDF Spokesman)

◀ The paratrooper's version of a cavalry charge: placing one foot in front of the other, and racing behind your commanding officer!
(IDF Spokesman)

◀▼ When its all said and done, a soldier needs his rest. Using their rucksacks as pillows, and brown leather jump boots as "slippers", conscript paratroopers reflect on their initiation to the rigors of advanced training in fitting fashion.
(BAMACHANE)

▼ After the maneuvers, exercises, and grit are all histroy; Ground Forces Commander Major General Uri Saguy, addresses an assembly of paratroopers in a critical review of their "battlefield" performance.
(BAMACHANE)

When the APCs, RPGs, and AN/PRCs are all forgotten for the moment, the paratroopers return to their unique calling card: parachuting. More often than not however, their instructor will be a female! The white background to the master parachutist wings denoting 50 jumps (below) and smaller HALO wings indicate instructor status.
(IGPO)

"While soldiers are forced to obey orders and perform in battle; the top brass are always allowed to play"! During a break in the training, Chief of Staff Lt. General Dan Shomron (left) and Ground Forces Commander Major General Uri Saguy (right) "play soldier" with an RPG. Note *Kefiyeh* Arab headdress used as a sight fastener.
(Tal Yodkovik/IDF Spokesman)

And the maneuvers continue: an excellent view of a paratroop sniper team in the Negev Desert. Note sniper team in the Negev Desert. Note sniper firing his M-21 (accurized version of the U.S. M-14 7.62mm weapon), and spotter, wearing Nomex gloves. Both wear ex-PLO "wooly-pully" sweaters.
(IDF Spokesman)

PLATE A

PLATE B

PLATE C

PLATE D

Portrait of a *GOLANI* radioman during routine joint-security along the northern frontier. Of interesting note is the *GALIL* ARM, with forward pistol grip oddly enough attached to weapon's built in bi-pod.
(BAMACHANE)

A posed, though sincere photo of infantrymen from the 1st *GOLANI* Infantry Brigade sitting beneath their brigade's proud symbol.
(Author's Collection)

After a successful patrol against Shi'ite and Palestinian terrorist targets in southern Lebanon, *GOLANI* infantrymen return to home base. Note rucksack carrying anti-tank rifle grenades. (BAMACHANE)

At a mud drenched base inside the "security belt" in southern Lebanon, a *GOLANI* infantryman wearing a Kevlar flak-vest, and rain smock treads toward the canteen; for his daily staple of cigarettes, candy bars, and cola. Note *GUILON* SAR with attached forward pistol grip. (IDF Spokesman)

Wearing the IDF issue *DUBON* winter parka, issued *HERMONIOT* winter shoes, and a non-issue winter's field cap, a *GOLANI* 2nd Lt. scours the mountains near the Beka'a Valley for any "unfriendly" movement.
(IDF Spokesman)

Hardened by months of brutal basic infantry training, followed by further months of training and operational duty, *GOLANI* infantrymen face little adversity they cannot overcome: including the most spartan of living conditions such as in this forward base inside southern Lebanon.
(IDF Spokesman)

GOLANI infantrymen proving that night is their true domain. Conducting an offensive patrol inside southern Lebanon, heavily armed *GOLANI* troopers head out in the dark unknown. Note large rucksack loaded with extra ammunition for "any eventually".
(Herzl Kunesari/IDF Spokesman)

Operating in once was a purely *GOLANI* domain, an IDF "Alpine" unit negotiates the beautiful and ultra-strategic Mt. Hermon range. Note white coveralls, large white rucksacks, and ubiquitous olive green web gear.
(*BAMACHANE*)

Conducting maneuvers on the alpine like slopes of Mt. Hermon, *GOLANI* riflemen wearing *BEGED HOREF* winter suits and carrying *GLILON* SARs plough a path through the a new domain for these Israeli soldiers: snow!
(IDF Spokesman)

Hopefuls for *SAYERET GOLANI*, the brigade's elite reconnaissance force, negotiate a forced march through some "unstable terrain" during their trials for acceptance.
(*BAMACHANE*)

GOLANI infantrymen practice one of the most fundamental aspects of warfare learned inLebanon: close quarter urban fighting. In a built-up obstacle course reminiscent of the Palestinian urban squalor of Tyre, Sidon, and Beirut, a *GOLANI* 1st. Lieutenant directs his pupils on how to safely fill an "unidentified" room with neutralizing bursts of 5.56mm *GALIL* fire.
(*BAMACHANE*)

At their training base "somewhere in Israel", *GOLANI* infantrymen practice one of the most important aspects of combat – urban built-up area fighting – on a replica of the typical house found in Lebanon. Note stretcher bearer about to enter farthest door laden down with extra ammunition, and trooper (kneeling), carrying LAW rockets.
(IDF Spokesman)

Seconds after the grenade left its launcher, a *GOLANI* weapons instructor pears through the blast and smoke to see how proficient his pupil really is with the RPG-7. Note cloth camouflage cover for infantry ballistic helmet.
(*BAMACHANE*)

Close-up of a *GOLANI* infantrymen preparing to fire the 66mm LAW anti-tank rocket, which in Lebanon was also used with great effect against enemy fortifications. The indigenous IDF LAW carrying rucksack is seen here to advantage. (IDF Spokesman)

Trying to emulate the proper military procedure for doing a very basic human skill, *GOLANI* Brigade trainees learn the ever important battlefield skill of "hitting the dirt"!
(IDF)

Amid the summer flowers of the Golan Heights, a *GOLANI* radioman carrying an AN/PRC-25 fires his *GALIL* 5.56mm assault rifle during battalion exercises.
(IDF Spokesman)

Very patient, very concealed, and very deadly! Hiding amid the high Galilee grass, a *GOLANI* rifleman searches for a target. Note camouflaged cloth used with amazing effects.
(*BAMACHANE*)

"Party time during training"! Awaiting the order from the company commander over the AN/PRC-77, a *GOLANI* 2nd. Lt. awaits the order to attack, on a firing course in southern Israel.
(*BAMACHANE*)

GOLANI infantrymen prepare themselves for the next conflict along the rolling Galilee hills. Note radioman's method for carrying receiver; clipped to rubber tubing surrounding the helmet.
(IDF Spokesman)

With the effects of a few kilograms of high explosives providing a nasty diversion, members of the *GOLANI* sapper unit (*HA'AN GOLANI*) await to assault their target.
(*BAMACHANE*)

During operations in Lebanon, *GOLANI* infantrymen sprint for cover. Note rifleman carrying rucksack filled to capacity with U.S. made LAW 66mm anti-tank rockets, and all soldiers wearing protective goggles attached to their Kevlar infantry ballistic helmets.
(Alex Libek/*BAMACHANE*)

Taking the importance of battlefield communications to its extreme definition; a *GOLANI* platoon commander makes sure he has all of his units in place before leading an attack.
(Sivan Farag/IDF Spokesman)

On the Golan Heights, *GOLANI* infantrymen learn the true meaning of "combined arms", in battle training with armor units. Note rifleman (left) laden down with '37 type large pack loaded to capacity with additional ammunition. (Sivan Farag/IDF Spokesman)

With the tell-tale clouds of smoke indicating the "explosive" intensity of the battle exercises atop the Golan Heights, *GOLANI* riflemen await for their supporting *MERKAVA*'s opening salvo, and their introduction to the fray. (Sivan Farag/IDF Spokesman)

This *GOLANI* grenadier offers an excellent rear view of the standard IDF infantry web gear, and in particular, the indigenous rucksack for carrying anti-tank rifle grenades.
(IDF Spokesman)

The snow capped peaks of *Jebel es-Shiekh*, Mt. Hermon, whose defense the *GOLANI* Brigade has sworn to uphold. At a ceremony commemorating the 15th anniversary of the Mt. Hermon battles against Syrian commandos during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, *GOLANI* Brigade jeeps and personnel assemble at the awe inspiring sight.
(IDF Spokesman)

Although the mechanized nature of today's *GOLANI* Brigade is absolute, it has never lost its flair and tradition for "mountain" warfare. Led by the squad *MAGist*, a *GOLANI* unit attempts to master the steep incline of a northern Israeli hill. Note method for carrying stretcher, and gas masks carried ominously.
(BAMACHANE)

Running and firing at a pace the radioman finds difficult to emulate, a *GIVA'ATI* 1st. Lieutenant makes the most of an infantry assault course during maneuvers in the desert. Note goggles attached to officer's infantry ballistic helmet.
(IDF Spokesman)

After proving themselves as one of the premier IDF infantry units, soldiers in the *GIVA'ATI* Infantry Brigade proudly stand in line to exchange their black berets, for their brigade's own distinctive purple Class A headgear.
(IDF Spokesman)

After re-capturing Mt. Hermon in a ceremonious exercise, exhausted *GOLANI* infantrymen watch as their version of aerial artillery – Bell-209 Cobra attack helicopters – provide some very effective and dramatic fire support.
(Sivan Farag/IDF Spokesman)

Two *GIVA'ATI* soldiers, a recon infantryman and a female soldier display their brigade's unique purple beret. Photograph offers an excellent view of the method for wearing insignia, in particular the unit tag worn on left shoulder, paratroop and smaller reconnaissance wings above the left breat pocket, and the *GIVA'ATI* Brigade tunic badge worn above the right breat pocket.
(IDF Spokesman)

Recon infantrymen from *SAYERET GIVA'ATI* (the brigade's reconnaissance force) lay down some support fire, for their assault force "storming" an enemy fortification during exercises in southern Israel.
(IDF Spokesman)

While his mates in a heavily upgraded M113 *ZELDA* APC provide some cover fire, a *GIVA'ATI* infantryman "walks shotgun" on a firing range in central Israel.
(Author's Collection)

Although its rare to still see the .50 caliber machine gun used as an infantryman carried squad support weapon in front line IDF infantry units, the *GIVA'ATI* Brigade has never been known not to take advantage of weaponry in its arsenal.
(IDF Spokesman)

Excellent view of a *GIVA'ATI* sniper in action. Note small pack which is part of the load bearing equipment, used to conveniently carry the square shaped M-21 magazines. Note American OG-107 fatigue trousers worn: the favorite of quartermasters, officers, and snipers!
(*BAMACHANE*)

▲ With his impatient squad leader looking on, a *GIVA'ATI* infantryman prepares to fire his 52mm mortar.
(IDF Spokesman)

▲▶ With their boots full of sand, their uniforms dripping wet, and another 15 kilometers yet to negotiate, heavily laden *GIVA'ATI* infantrymen prepare to climb but one more hill.
(IDF Spokesman)

▶ Observing a long column of advancing *MERKAVA*s, *GIVA'ATI* radioman looks on in awe.
(IDF Spokesman)

▲◀ On a firing range in northern Israel, two *GIVA'ATI* infantrymen offer two different firing poses for two different version of the *GLILON* SAR.
(IDF Spokesman)

▲ A classic *GIVA'ATI* patrol in action: an officer, radioman, grenadier, and rifleman.
(IDF Spokesman)

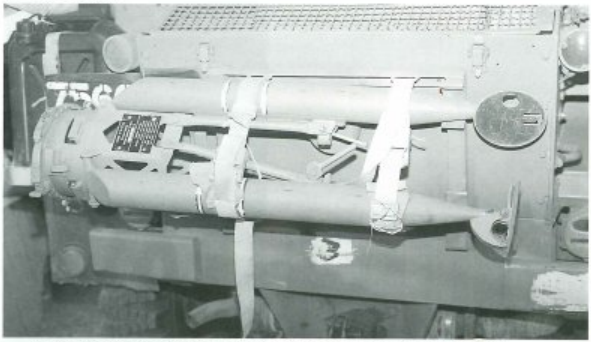
◀ The masked men of the *GIVA'ATI* Brigade: on maneuvers in central Israel, mechanized infantrymen respond to NBC training. Note vehicle commander wearing Arab *Kefiyeh* worn as a scarf. All the *GIVA'ATI* infantrymen wear Type 602 Kevlar crew ballistic helmets.
(IDF Spokesman)

SAYERET GIVA'ATI recon infantrymen practice river crossing techniques. They wear the standard IDF/Navy issue "German" life-vests, together with the load bearing equipment.
(*BAMACHANE*)

Training for the next conflict, *GIVA'ATI* infantrymen ford a river obstacle, and learn the intricate art of amphibious assaults.
(IDF Spokesman)

In the desert domain of IDF Southern Command, a *GIVA'ATI* infantryman laden down with a section of the *MAPATZ* (Israeli modified infantry carried TOW ATGW) pauses for a few moments of badly needed rest.
(IDF Spokesman)

Excellent view of a *SAYERET GIVA'ATI MAPATZ* (TOW ATGW) team in action. Note officer (aiming) carrying CAR-15 slung over shoulder, and spotter (with field glasses), carrying new rucksack developed for load bearing equipment.
(IDF Spokesman)



Close-up view of the *MAPATZ* tri-pod attached to a *GIVA'ATI* vehicle.
(Sigalit Katz)

Frontier duty of a different sort: a tense *GIVA'ATI* force conducts a joint-security patrol on the wrong side of the Lebanese border.
(IDF Spokesman)

Frontier duty! With the help of Bedouin trackers (wearing red and white checkered *Kefiyehs*, *GIVA'ATI* infantrymen patrol the border with Egypt against smugglers, and terrorist infiltrators.
(*BAMACHANE*)

Frontier duty of a third kind! During the height of the Palestinian *intifadeh* or uprising, a force of *GIVA'ATI* infantrymen set out in the M113 for security duty in the Gaza Strip. Note infantry ballistic helmet specially fitted with plexi-glass visors to protect the soldier's eyes from the host of rocks, knives, and Molotov cocktails they encounter everyday.
(Sivan Farag/IDF Spokesman)

A

B

The Lebanon war became known in many ways as the "Flak-vest Conflict" because of the wide-spread use of body armor among the IDF troops; especially in the infantry and paratroop forces. Besides being worn for protection, a certain amount of comfort and practicality was expected from the indigenously designed body armor, as seen in the two examples pictured: (A) combination of web gear and Kevlar body armor, designed especially for paratroop and infantry forces operating close to "base", and (B) an Kevlar flak-vest designed specifically for assault forces, with extra armor plating in place in chest area.
(Author's Collection)

With the force from the Bell-212's rotor blades producing an artificial whirlpool, commandos from the Israel Air Force's elite "Aeromedical Evacuation Unit" (AEU) practice retrieving a downed pilot in "enemy" waters. During the Lebanon war, the AEU rescued countless of wounded soldiers trapped behind enemy lines, and within the past two years, they have conducted two spectacular rescue operations from deep behind enemy lines in Lebanon, where those saved were flown back to Israel clinging to the helicopter in flight.
(*BAMACHANE*)

One of the most secretive of all IDF elite units, the naval Commandos have for years captured the imagination and awe of the Israeli public through their classified operations. Soldiers from the *KOMMANDO YAMI* (Naval Commandos) wearing locally produced black neoprene wet suits prepare to enter the warm Mediterranean on a routine day's dive.
(IDF Spokesman)

PLATE A

1. PARATROOPER MAGist
   This stretcher bearer doubling as the squad's FN MAG 7.62mm light machine gunner wears the standard IDF combat uniform and equipment of the post 1980 period; consisting of olive fatigue blouse and "three" pocket olive fatigue trousers, and brown leather paratroop combat boots. He also wears the Israeli produced Kevlar infantry ballistic helmet complete with tan netting and black rubber tubing, as well as the Israeli produced Kevlar flak vest or *SHACHPATS*. The stretcher is carried on a black infantry packboard. Of interesting note is the tan khaki canvas ammunition/spent shell bag attached to the Israeli produced FN MAG.

2. PARATROOPER GRENADIER
   As seen in plate A-1, most IDF infantrymen and paratroopers share a double, sometimes even triple squad weapon support role; as in the case of this grenadier also entrusted with an AN/PRC-25 field radio. Carried is a very interesting offshoot of Israeli Military Industries hardware and an "off the shelf item": the *GLILON* 5.56mm short barrelled assault rifle fitted with the American M/203 40mm grenade launcher. Note olive nylon watch cover, a staple home-grown production, most soldiers make themselves during the few and far between hours of free time in basic training.

3. PARATROOPER GRENADIER
   This grenadier in full combat kit carries the *GALIL* 5.56mm assault rifle with built in bi-pod, fitted with a special 12 round magazine for firing rifle launched anti-tank and anti-personnel grenades rounds. The supply of grenades is carried in a rucksack worn on the back, able to hold over a dozen such grenades. His remaining equipment, including 30 round *GALIL* magazines, grenades, and canteens are carried in the indigenous, and extremely comfortable load bearing equipment, or *EPHOD*. Note knee pads worn for maximum protection when firing in a crouched or lying down position. Of interesting note is the Syrian pattern lizard camouflage cloth worn as helmet covering, a practice which began following the Lebanon War. The Kevlar infantry ballistic helmet is supported by tan rubber tubing.

4. PARATROOPER NCO
   Besides being one of the most familiar and indentifiable weapons in the world, the Soviet RPG-7 is also one of the most lethal infantry held anti-tank systems in existence. So many RPGs were captured by the IDF since the 1967 War, that it has become the standard infantry held anti-tank weapon in the IDF's vast inventory. The PG-7 grenades are carried on an indigenously produced tan khaki canvas case, modelled after the Russian version. The weapon carried is the *GLILON* 5.56mm SAR.

1 2 3 4

PLATE B

1. PARATROOPER RADIOMAN
This *TZANHAN* (paratrooper) radioman carrying an AN/PRC-77 field radio wears an ex-PLO British "wooly pully" sweater, which following the 1982 Lebanon War became a standard article of uniform for *all* IDF personnel. Another interesting relic of the Lebanon War is the red and white *kefiyeh* or "Arab headdress", worn as a scarf under the Kevlar flak vest. Initially, a *Kefiyeh* worn as a scarf indicated a Lebanon veteran, but soon became a favorite of all combat soldiers in the field. The weapon carried is the *GLILON* SAR.

2. PARATROOPER NCO
IDF units in Lebanon faced a host of climactic adversities, ranging from insufferable hot summers to excruciating cold winters. In addition, elements such as incessant rains and blizzard snows made counter-terrorist operations against Palestinian and Shi'ite Muslim forces a most arduous undertaking. This paratroop First Sergeant (IDF ranks not worn in the field) wears an olive drab nylon rain smock over his olive fatigue blouse, and flak vest. He is armed with a *GLILON* SAR, fitted with a forward pistol grip.

3. PARATROOPER 1ST LIEUTENANT
Although the paratroopers are under the control of the *KA'TZ'CHAR* (Chief Paratroop and Infantry Officer), and their call to fame is airborne operations, the paratroop operations are almost exclusively mechanized, with the M113 *ZELDA* competing with the C-130 Hercules for paratrooper's favorite mode of transportation. As a result paratroop field dress reflects the "armor" element quite distinctively. This 1st Lieutenant (*SEGEN*) wears the standard issue *DUBON* winter parka, three pocket olive fatigue trousers, and brown combat boots. He also wears the Orlite Type 602 crewman ballistic helmet, and the modified *EPHOD HA'SHAN* or *EPHOD HEYL SHIRION* (Armored Corps web gear), consisting of chest pouches and rectangular canteens. He carries the CAR-15 5.56mm assault rifle, which has become the favored personal weapon of IDF combat officers.

4. PARATROOPER RIFLEMAN
This riflemen fully equipped for the harsh Lebanese winter wears the one piece insulated *BEGED HOREF* overalls, complete with *HERMONIOT* winter boots. Nomex gloves are worn, as is the standard load bearing equipment. The personal weapon carried is the *GALIL* AR, the long barrelled version of the 5.56mm assault rifle which has no built in bi-pod, and can be fitted with a bayonet.

1 2 3 4

PLATE C

1. SNIPER, GIVA'ATI BRIGADE
Through determined efforts, harsh infantry training, and successful service along the Lebanese frontier; the *GIVA'ATI* Infantry Brigade has developed into one of the IDF's premier infantry units. This sniper, armed with the M-21 (accurized M-14) 7.62mm rifle wears the standard issue olive fatigue blouse, with American OG-107 fatigue trousers. A *KOVA RAFUL* (named after ex-Chief of Staff "Rafu!" Eitan) fatigue hat with *TZAHAL* (Hebrew acronym for Israel Defense Force) is also worn, as are black combat boots, and protective knee pads. Extra ammunition is carried in a khaki canvas '37 pattern small pack worn on the back.

2. CAPTAIN, GOLANI INFANTRY BRIGADE
The 1st *GOLANI* Brigade is one of the IDF's oldest, and most battle-experienced brigades, fighting in every one of Israel's wars, and in countless security, and special operations - such as the rescue raid on Entebbe ("Operation Thunderbolt"), and a recent daring seaborne raid against the headquarters of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command (PFLP-GC) in Damour Lebanon. This *GOLANI* officer wears standard field kit, including olive fatigue blouse with *TZAHAL* nametape across the left breast pocket, and OG-107 fatigue trousers. He also wears a white T-shirt, imprinted with the brigade's tree emblem and "My *GOLANI*" brigade motto. His rank of *SEREN* (Captain) is represented by the light tan khaki rank loops, imprinted with three kelly green bars. he wears an olive fatigue baseball cap, as well as the *GOLANI* Brigade's symbol of pride, the brown beret, tucked into the left epaulet. He carries a *GLILON* SAR, K-BAR knife and M1951S 9mm Beretta pistol worn on the khaki canvas pistol belt, as well as an American made LAW 66mm anti-tank rocket for some impromptu anti-tank target practice.

3. MAJOR, GIVA'ATI INFANTRY BRIGADE
This *GIVA'ATI* Infantry Brigade *RAV-SEREN* (Major) wears the standard IDF field uniform, although the brigade's unique Class A purple beret with infantry (*HEYL RAGLIM*) beret badge is also worn. He carries a Browning 9mm hi-power automatic in a khaki canvas holster, and is armed with a CAR-15 5.56mm assault rifle with two magazines attached to one another.

4. SAYERET GOLANI RECONNAISSANCE INFANTRYMAN
Of all the IDF paratroop and infantry reconnaissance or *SAYERET* forces, many consider *SAYERET GOLANI* to be the best. This tank hunter carrying the Soviet RPG-7, also carries an MPiKMS, the East German variant of the Soviet 7.62mm AKM assault rifle; as captured Arab weapons are favored among IDF elite units. His Kevlar infantry ballistic helmet is camouflaged with a cloth covering from a Palestinian lizard pattern camouflage uniform, and is supported by tan rubber tubing. Of interesting note is the strobe blinker light attached to the helmet, for night time station keeping.

PLATE D

1. NAVAL COMMANDO MAGist
The *KOMMANDO YAMI* (Naval Commandos) are one of the IDF's premier elite units, and also one of their most secretive. This "underwater warrior" seen on maneuvers wears a black neoprene divers suit with short pants for comfort, and black neoprene diving shoes. He wears the standard IDF load bearing equipment, and a 100 round link of 7.62mm ammunition for his FN MAG light machine gun (note spent shell/ammunition carrying bag). He also carries two LAW rockets, and note the divers knife attached to right leg.

2. PARATROOPER GRENADIER
This paratrooper wears an interesting experiment in soldier personal protection and equipment carrying methods; a Kevlar flak vest with attached load bearing ammunition pouches. The system consists of four ammunition pouches suitable for *GALIL*, M-16 or AK-47 magazines and grenades, a rear personal pouch, and two canteen pouches. This paratrooper wears the olive three pocket fatigue trousers, brown combat boots, and a Kevlar infantry ballistic helmet camouflaged with a cloth portion an American BDU pattern uniform - the favorite article of clothing of the Shi'ite militias in southern Lebanon. He carries the *GLILON*/203 combination SAR grenade launching system.

3. SERGEANT/INSTRUCTOR PARATROOPER
Of all IDF units, few take as much care and pride in their Class A uniform as the *TZANHANIM*. The paratroop dress kit consists of a four pocket olive smock called the *YARKIT* which is worn with an attached waist belt. The Class A trousers are almost identical to their fatigue version, except they are baggier, and of a finer, and lighter material. The silver metal paratroop wings are worn with a blue (regular) background, directly above the left breast pocket. Instructor status is indicated by a red lanyard, and the three stripes indicating the rank of *SAMAL* (sergeant) are sewn on the upper arm sleeves. The infamous winged snake unit tag of the *HATIVAT HATZANHANIM* (Paratroop Brigade) is worn attached to the left epaulet. The characteristic red beret is also worn, complete with infantry beret badge and red plastic backing.

4. AEROMEDICAL EVACUATION UNIT OFFICER
This air rescuer from the Israel Air Force (IAF) Aeromedical Evacuation Unit (AEU) wears the typical IAF aircrewman kit, consisting of an Israeli copy of the K-2B sage green flight suit, Israeli produced survival pouches, royal blue rank loops inverted here to conceal rank for security purposes, and an American SPH-4C single visor helmet painted red. Over the flight suit, this officers wears the much coveted *"Battledress"* light sage green pilot's jacket, with the ubiquitous *HEYL HAVIR* patch sewn above the left sleeve pen pocket. The weapon carried is the Soviet ex-PLO AKMS 7.62mm AKMS with two magazines taped together.

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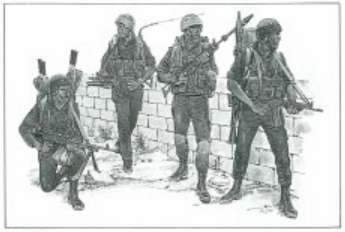

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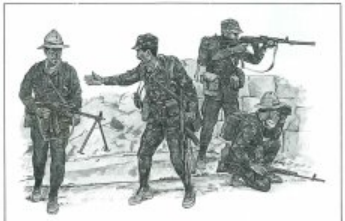

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